

Promoting Regional Energy Partnerships for Advancing Resilient Energy Systems Act (PREPARE Act)

Our energy system faces big regional challenges

U.S. energy systems and the associated infrastructure are currently in a period of significant change. A majority of energy assets are ready for retirement or replacement, and decisions made today will have lasting impacts over the next 40-50 years. The energy sector is at a tipping point with a wave of new technologies, new regulations, and rapidly evolving market and business conditions. More frequent and intense extreme weather events and the increasing number of cyber and physical attacks on critical energy infrastructure also pose unique challenges that need to be managed. The decisions we make now have important implications for economic growth, national security and household budgets.

Yet US energy systems are not constrained by state boundaries. Recent blackouts have highlighted the interconnected nature of U.S. energy systems, with energy disruptions starting in one state extending to neighboring states and regions. For many customers electricity is supplied by utilities that operate across multiple states, dispatched by ISOs who cross state and national borders, and moved across transmission systems planned and operated on a regional basis. This means that improved cooperation and coordination of the various federal, state and regional stakeholders is needed to modernize US energy systems and keep them clean, efficient, cost-effective, reliable and resilient.

We need regional partnerships to tackle them

While DOE's State Energy Program provides resources and technical assistance to support development and improvement of State energy plans, the primary focus of the Program is on expanding the use of energy efficiency and renewable energy within individual states. As U.S. energy systems become more complex and interconnected, a more comprehensive framework with broad stakeholder participation is needed to develop robust strategies and plans for meeting energy, environmental, and economic goals. Regional strategies and plans that engage federal resources and expertise, state actors who are close to the ground, and the businesses and organizations that actually run our energy systems day-to-day can prepare for uncertainties and threats significantly more effectively than a state-by-state approach.

The PREPARE Act authorizes DOE to enter into regional cooperative agreements with States, providing technical assistance and working closely with key stakeholders, to develop strategies and plans that address the unique energy needs of the region. Serving as a long-term strategic partner, DOE can act as convener, independent facilitator, and technical expert on emerging energy issues. A dedicated DOE presence will help states and regions connect with other federal agencies and national entities, and support planning processes and implementation of core activities. The PREPARE Act will help states and regions identify tangible goals, develop solutions with broad stakeholder support, and foster cooperation in pursuit of a modernized grid and a cleaner and more resilient energy system.